

CHYMICAL EXPERIMENTS

ON THE

BARNET WELL WATER,

BY

THE REV. WILLIAM MARTIN TRINDER, M. D.

—*Experto, credite!*

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TO THE
TOWNSHIP
OF
BARNET, in HERTFORDSHIRE.

GENTLEMEN,

THE ancient celebrity of your medicinal spring of water on Barnet Common, which formerly made your town so much a place of public resort, that more than thirty carriages for hire were kept for the convenience of the company attending the well, has induced me to dedicate to you the result of some experiments on the water, which, in my mind, sufficiently evince its principal characters.

Under this conviction, I have declined the very troublesome work of analysis by evaporation, and more especially, because I am of opinion that the exsiccative process doth so very much destroy or alter the original combination of the elements, that

the criteria of the water would be spiritless and defective.

Earnestly hoping, both for your benefit and the public good, that the Barnet well water may soon be restored to its pristine and well-merited renown,

I remain, Gentlemen,
with great respect,
Your most obedient
and very humble servant,

W M. MARTIN TRINDER.

Mill Hill, Hendon,
Oct. 1, 1800.

N. B. In the year 1677, on the 23d of May, Mr. Owen, an alderman of London, besides other donations to the town of Barnet, gave 20 shillings per annum, for ever, to the said town of Barnet, in trust, to be paid by the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers, for the repair of the physic well on the Common.

ALSO,

In an act of Parliament passed in the 2d year of George the Second, for an enclosure of part of Barnet Common, a clause was inserted for the due security of the right of the medicinal well to the inhabitants of Barnet for ever.

CHYMICAL

CHYMICAL EXPERIMENTS,

etc.

THE BARNET WELL WATER

IS about three quarters of a mile from the town of Barnet, on the Common: four long rows of fine fir-trees, that were planted as an ornamental directory to the well, lead to it from the high road.

The water strains through a clay into the well, which is in the centre of a bricked room, square, lofty, and well roofed. This building is in a little field, not far from the starting-post on the race-ground. The water is of the ordinary colour of other water. It is very brisk; for, being poured from one vessel into another, innumerable bubbles of air are seen every where to arise. Its smell and taste, at the spring

head, are slightly sulphureous*; but, after standing for some time, till the vapour has exhaled, the taste is somewhat brackish, though by no means nauseous, nor even disagreeable; yet if any one should find it so, a few candied caraway-seeds would take off the ill taste, and serve, in some degree, to strengthen the stomach. This water, especially if drank at the spring head, is apt to excite a glow and heat of the whole body; and I have found a draught of it, after dinner, to promote digestion nearly as well as a glass of wine, and indeed much better than a dose of ordinary beer.

The thermometer stood in the well at about 20 degrees above the freezing point, on Michaelmas Day 1800; and its specific gravity to rain-water (both being at 55 degrees of heat, by Fahrenheit, which is the usual degree in which the specific gravity of liquids is ascertained) is as follows:

	Weight, per cubic Foot, or 1728 cubic Inches.	Weight, per Gallon of 231 cubic Inch. lb. oz. dr.
Rain-water	1000 oz. avoird.	8 5 10 $\frac{153}{1728}$
Barnet well water	1007 $\frac{48}{231}$ oz.	8 6. 9

* This vapour is apt to affect the head, though transiently, of some persons that drink the water at the well.

CHYMICAL

CHYMICAL TESTS.

1. With mild vegetable alkali, heavy and white clouds appeared, with an abundant sediment.

N. B. Vitriolic acid instantly redissolved the clouds and sediment.

2. Acid of sugar cast a white colour and a white precipitation, but vitriolic acid caused both to disappear.

3. Aqua kali produced thick, white clouds, and an abundant sediment, but distilled vinegar redissolved them.

4. A solution of silver produced pearl-coloured clouds, and, afterwards, a dark striated sediment.

5. Muriated barytes caused a great precipitation, beautifully white.

6. A solution of mercury in nitrous acid, at first, cast a white sediment, but afterwards it became yellowish as a turbith mineral.

7. Sugar of lead cast a white cloud and sediment, which were almost, but not quite, redissolved by distilled vinegar.

8. Lime-water produced very thin and striated clouds, and a very small precipitation.

9. Paper stained with Brazil made no alteration in the colour of the water, nor paper stained with a tincture of Litmus.

10. Phlogistic alkali pure and perfectly unserruginated, cast so slight a green colour, that it was hardly perceptible at the spring head; but on the application of one single drop of muriatic acid, in a two-ounce glafs, a very beautiful Prussian blue instantly appeared.

11. Galls, at first, brought on a turbid wheyishness, but afterwards settled into a very dark green colour.

12. Soap was strongly curdled.

13. Equal parts of the water and milk boiled together formed a clear whey, with strong white curds.

14. A slice of rhubarb was much reddened by the water.

15. Powdered logwood struck a crimson colour.

From these experiments, it is evident
that

that the Barnet well water contains a sulphury magnesia, or Epsom salt, aerial gas, and a very minute portion of iron. If there be any calcareous or argillaceous earth (forming alum with the vitriolic acid), it is so small in quantity as not to warrant the following character of the water in Camden's Britannia, in the additions to Hertfordshire: "Upon the south border of this county is Barnet, where was discovered a medicinal spring, supposed, by the taste, to run through veins of alum. It coagulates milk, and the curd whereof is an excellent plater for any green wound."

This water deserves the double character of a mild cleanser and bracer of the system, first clearing the passages of feculent matter, then strengthening their tone. In colics it is much to be recommended; for it either obtunds and expels the acrimony, irritating the bowels, or, especially if drank warm, it relaxes the painful distension occasioned by wind, and counteracts hysterical and nervous spasms. In costiveness and hernias it is of great service,

vice, for it keeps the body cool and soluble; but in any case of habitual costiveness, if the water should not have the desired effect, it may be quickened by a little of the vitriolated magnesia of the shops, say a dram to an half pint.

In palpitations of the heart, it is a good remedy, and also for women after 50, who, from a cessation of the usual returns, often fall from a redundancy of blood into internal heats, flatulency, pains in the back, and loss of appetite.

In gross habits, and in the hypochondriacal and hysterical disease, commonly called nervous, and against scorbutic eruptions, and also in fluor albus, it is greatly to be recommended; for, after it has discharged the foul gluten in the body (if then drank in such quantity only as shall act as an alterative), it braces and strengthens the system, thereby preventing any future morbid accumulation.

This water, as an antiscorbutic, so amends the serum of the blood, that, after drinking it for some time, the veins appear of an extraordinary blueness; and, therefore,

therefore, ladies that would preserve their beauty, might, besides drinking the water, constantly use it as a lotion, with becoming effect.

It gradually corrects and discharges any acrimony in the system, particularly the muriatic, which, I am of opinion, is putrid scurvy *; attended with some or other of the following signs—a salt taste in the mouth—urgent thirst—white, scaly, or red itching eruptions—hectic languor, and a profusion of salt urine, with an oily pellicle on the top. To persons thus distempered, a peculiar preparation of the Barnet well water will be very serviceable, which I take leave to denominate

BARNET BROTH

to be made thus. Infuse, for two hours, in a very gentle heat, one pound of the lean of beef, sliced thin, in a quart of the Barnet well water, in a well-covered

*It is said, that the late noble Admiral, Earl Howe, usually took a good quantity of the Barnet well water with him to sea.

saucepans; then add ten or a dozen shavings of ifinglass, about a dram in weight, but put no salt, nor any vegetable, nor any thing else therein. This Barnet broth (which, by its salutary effects in acrimonious diseases, will, I think, be, in fame, *ære perennius*) cannot be too much recommended as a general purifier and restorative in every sort of depravity of the juices in the human body; and therefore I write to the world as to my friend, in observing how much better it would be for the health of mankind to take a nightly draught of this *ære perennius*, than those vile potations of gin, rum, or brandy and water, that sicken or enfeeble the stomach in the morning, and perhaps destroy its tone for ever.

The first physicians by debauch were made;
Excess began, and custom drives the trade.

After hard drinking at night, a goblet of the Barnet well water, or a basin of the Barnet broth, will settle the stomach, and tend to carry off the ill effects of the debauch.

In incipient colds and rheumatisms, the whey (as by experiment 13) is a good remedy, it being both balsamic and detergent; it is beneficial, as also is the Barnet well water, in pimples and heats of the face, which are the signs of internal heat of the viscera; but the proper quantity to be drank of the water and its preparations, in whey or broth, can only be rightly ascertained by a good medical judgment on the case. As a laxative, generally speaking, from half a pint to a pint and half of the water, may be drank, in the course of 24 hours; but, as an alterative, a wine-glass full, three or four times a day, may be enough.

This Barnet well water will be found very serviceable in various inflammatory and scorbutic diseases; but I think not in asthma, dropsy, chlorosis, nor where there is great and manifest acidity in the system, nor where the lungs are vitiated, except it be drank in the form of whey.

If from the salutary properties of the Barnet water, ladies and gentlemen should be induced to reside some months in the

year

year in the vicinity of the well, they will find themselves in a salubrious atmosphere, unpolluted by the foul air of London, though only eleven miles from it, and in a country intersected with delightfully open and close roads, that may be lengthened to a course of 20 miles, without passing through a turnpike. In the summer season, a double or treble circuit, early in the morning, over the race-ground, on horse-back, after drinking a goblet of the Barnet well water, will most agreeably promote its salutary effects.

It is probable that this pamphlet may stir up a spirit of further inquiry among the gentlemen of the faculty, particularly at Barnet. This may be expedient for the establishment of public confidence; and although I am well satisfied with the faithfulness of my own report, yet I think that other experiments and researches, like friction, on an unpolished diamond, will certainly add to the value of truth, by bringing forth all its lustre in perfect beauty.

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